

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1195

By Lynn

A RESOLUTION relative to the taxation of gasoline and other motor fuels.

WHEREAS, the current federal gasoline tax has unquestionably departed from its historical justification, which was rooted in the benefit principle of taxation; and

WHEREAS, the movement away from the benefit principle is to the considerable detriment of sound tax policy, states' rights, quality public roads, millions of motorists, and the overall integrity of government "trust funds"; and

WHEREAS, dollars from the federal Highway Trust Fund are routinely used for non-highway purposes, or for projects only tangentially related to road construction and repair; and

WHEREAS, the increasingly popular practice of "earmarking" federal highway funds for specific local projects allows for an ever-increasing barrage of politically motivated pork barrel spending; and

WHEREAS, these egregious diversions of funds away from roads to "pork barrel" projects prove that the federal Highway Trust Fund does not adequately protect gasoline tax dollars and diverts important funding from many high-priority transportation needs; and

WHEREAS, states are often coerced into adopting costly federal mandates to receive their own transportation dollars back from the federal government in Washington; and

WHEREAS, the current federal micromanagement of transportation funding has created a large discrepancy that enriches some states at the expense of others; and

WHEREAS, the original federal goal of creating an interstate highway system was met in the early 1980s, and today's surface transportation problems are largely local and regional in nature; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that this General Assembly urges the United States Congress to devolve the responsibility of taxing motor fuels to the states, thereby eliminating the current system in which a federal gasoline tax is sent to Washington and subsequently sent back to the states through a cumbersome Department of Transportation bureaucracy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that it is the sense of this General Assembly that the states should be free to make decisions regarding which transportation infrastructure projects will be built, how they will be financed, and how they will be regulated.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that it is the sense of this General Assembly that the federal government should be prohibited from forcing unwanted mandates on the states by threatening to withhold transportation money.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution will be transmitted to the Speaker and the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, the President and the Secretary of the United States Senate, and to each member of Tennessee's Congressional delegation.